

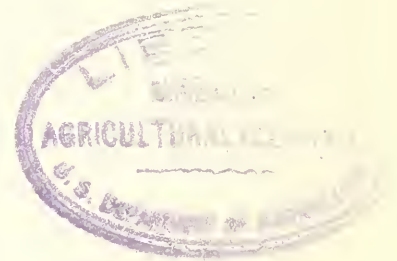
Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.7
2926754
MAR 20 1935

Discussion Group Topic No. 7

WHAT KIND OF A RURAL LIFE CAN WE LOOK
FORWARD TO IN THE UNITED STATES?



This material has been prepared to supply assistance for discussion groups. It is not intended to direct attention to any particular point of view. Neither is it presumed to be a complete or even an orderly presentation of the discussion possibilities of the topic. Its purpose is to stimulate discussion. It is intended to assist in creating opportunities for discussion in the belief that through intense discussion people may find ways of thinking through for themselves vital questions which require democratic decision.

The attention of discussion leaders and others is called particularly to the availability of "Discussion: A Brief Guide to Methods." This contains practical suggestions and information.

Copies of "Discussion: A Brief Guide to Methods," and copies of this and other group discussion topics can be obtained from the Department of Agriculture, Room 202, Washington, D. C., or by writing to the state agricultural college of your state.

February, 1935.

WHAT KIND OF RURAL LIFE CAN WE LOOK
FORWARD TO IN THE UNITED STATES?

American rural life of the past has been unique because of our rich national land resources, because other nations were anxious to buy our farm products, our extensive use of science and machines in farm production, and because farm ownership could be easily accomplished. At the present time some of our lands are exhausted, foreign demands for our farm products have declined and for the first time in our history hundreds of thousands of rural families are receiving public charity. Our rural life of the future will probably be considerably different from what it has been in the past.

1. ARE THERE VALUES IN RURAL MODES OF LIFE SO DISTINCT FROM URBAN MODES OF LIFE THAT THEY SHOULD AT ALL COSTS BE CONSERVED AND FOSTERED BY THE NATION?
2. IS THERE ANY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT AMERICAN RURAL LIFE CAN FOREVER BE MADE SUPERIOR TO THE PLEASANT LIFE OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES?
3. CAN WE HAVE THE KIND OF RURAL LIFE WE WANT IN THE UNITED STATES WITHOUT HAVING SOMETHING APPROACHING 100 PERCENT FARM HOME OWNERSHIP?
4. IF CONTINUED PROGRESS IS MADE IN THE COMMERCIALIZATION AND MECHANIZATION OF AMERICAN AGRICULTURE WILL IT RESULT IN THE DECLINE OF AMERICAN FARM FAMILY LIFE?
5. SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGE SMALL HOLDINGS, FAMILY-SIZED FARMS, AND DISCOURAGE LARGE-SCALE "INDUSTRIAL" FARMING, AS A MATTER OF PUBLIC POLICY?
6. CAN THE TREND TOWARD LARGE-SCALE EFFICIENCIES BE GOVERNED? HAVE WE ANY CHOICE AS TO THE FUTURE PATTERNS OF RURAL LIFE, OR WILL THEY BE, AS IN THE PAST, LARGELY DETERMINED BY ECONOMIC FORCES ON THE MARCH?



S O M E P R O S A N D C O N S

I

"The most satisfactory rural life can be attained by increasing the net farm income. Farmers produce the prime necessities of life for the rest of society and therefore society owes them an income great enough to make it possible for them to have all the necessities and conveniences of life and a fair amount of leisure."

"Furnish farmers adequate income and they will buy what they need and want. They know what they need and want, Guarantee them purchasing power and they will build a good rural life, without special planning or guidance."

II

"The last way on earth to get a good rural life would be to make it possible for rural people to buy what city people have. A rich rural life decays just to the extent that urban habits of spending, urban interests and urban standards of order penetrate rural areas. The rural population, through high birth rates and healthful living, always has and should continue to guarantee the vitality of the nation. The surest way to happiness and a rich rural life is to perpetuate a considerable degree of isolation, self-sufficiency and native culture in rural areas. City ways are not adapted to rural areas and the contribution rural life can make to the nation will be greatly limited if attempts are made to impose urban ways and standards on country people."

III

"By a graduated land tax, by preferential crop quotas and allotments, or by outright subsidy, the Government should encourage small holdings, family-sized farms, and discourage or penalize large-scale, industrial farming correspondingly. What we need are more small farms, independently owned or operated. A rural life built on such a pattern will sustain more people, hold more families together and provide not only a more satisfying existence, but a sounder foundation for American democracy."



IV

" A nation can not grow backwards. To penalize large-scale farming operations, with centralized management, advanced machinery, and the utmost use of such commercial and industrial techniques as other businesses employ, is to curb progress, and to press upon agriculture, separately, un-American, peasant-like standards. To do so by taxing large-scale operations out of existence, or by use of differential crop allotments -- with no adjustment payments made, for instance, on more than 100 acres of wheat, per farm--would be to penalize inventiveness and free enterprise, and to indemnify sloth and inefficiency."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Galpin, C. J. -----Rural Social Problems. The Century Co.
New York. 1924. Chapter XVI "Sources
of Rural Hope." (\$2.00)
- Russell, George W.---The National Being. New York. 1916. (\$1.75)
Macmillan Co.
- Sanderson, Dwight----Farm Income and Farm Life. University of
et al. Chicago Press, Chicago. 1927. (\$3.00)
- Sorakin, P. and-----Principles of Rural - Urban Sociology.
Zimmerman, C. C. (Student Edition) New York. 1929. Henry
Holt and Co. Chapter XXVII. "Retrospect,
Present Situation and Prospect". (\$3.50)
- Taylor, Carl C.-----Rural Sociology. Revised Edition. New
York. Harper and Brothers. 1933. Chapter
XXIX "The Farmer and Civilization." (\$3.25)
- Bailey, L. H.-----The Harvest. New York. Macmillan Company.
1927. (\$1.50)
- Poe, Clarence-----Farm Life: Problems and Opportunities.
Chicago. American Library Association. 1931.
(35¢)
- Galpin, C. J.-----My Philosophy of Rural Life. Washington, U. S.
Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricul-
tural Economics. 1930. Mimeographed.

